



PRESS RELEASE

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U.S. Agency for International Development

Strategic Development Office (503) 2501-3471

U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section (503) 2501-2471

Email: kazucena@usaid.gov

<http://www.usaid.gov/sv>

<http://elsalvador.usembassy.gov/>

“NATIONAL HIV/AIDS TESTING DAY” CAMPAIGN IS LAUNCHED

SAN SALVADOR— Under the slogan, “Take the Test,” the “National HIV/AIDS Testing Day” Promotional campaign was launched this morning as a joint effort by the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the National Commission Against AIDS El Salvador (CONASIDA, in Spanish), with technical and financial assistance from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The U.S. government’s support for this campaign amounts to \$300,000 and is being channeled through USAID’s HIV/AIDS Program, which is providing \$1,600,000 to fight the pandemic disease in El Salvador.

The United States identified the need of establishing the U.S. National HIV/AIDS Testing Day, choosing June 27. The U.S. requested in the United Nations that all countries adhere to this initiative. El Salvador President Elias Antonio Saca responded positively and adopted June 27 as the El Salvador’s National HIV/AIDS Testing Day, when any person could receive free voluntary counseling, testing and confidential results for HIV/AIDS in any MOH health facility or mobile units.

The USAID-funded HIV/AIDS Program in El Salvador has a two-pronged approach: prevention and improved policy environment. USAID, through its partner Population Services International/Pan-American Social Marketing Organization (PASMO), supports behavior change communication activities reaching approximately 200,000 persons, among them commercial sex workers and their clients, men–having-sex-with-men, and people living with HIV/AIDS.

Moreover, USAID supports the Ministry of Health’s HIV/AIDS National Program through the design, validation and implementation of mass media campaigns to increase awareness and foster demand for voluntary counseling and testing services. USAID’s support includes promoting access to those services for commercial sex workers and men–having-sex-with-men, as well as developing educational materials related to sexual transmitted infections risk factors.

The fight against HIV/AIDS is one of the U.S. government’s top priorities. The goal of the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan/PEPFAR) is to support antiretroviral treatment (ART) for two million HIV-infected individuals, prevention of 7 million infections, and care for 10 million people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, including orphans and vulnerable children.

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